

Ten Common Remodeling Mistakes and How to Avoid Them



MISTAKE NO. 10

Trying to Keep Up with the Joneses (or Instagram or HGTV)

Spend your own budget – not that of your neighbor. Don't let the most recent social media post or your neighbor's beautiful new renovation drive your spending. Be yourself and spend what you can afford.

TO AVOID THIS MISTAKE:

- Find your financing first.
- Establish a realistic budget and then add 10% for the unknown.
- Decide what you want to accomplish most in the project and base your decisions on those priorities.
- Establish second-tier priorities – those that are optional if affordable.

MISTAKE NO. 9

Not Realizing What You Need Most

Financial constraints are important, but also focus on what is most important to you. Once a project is finished it may be too late or too costly to add that extra window, upgraded countertop or new flooring you really wanted. By prioritizing the areas of your remodel that are must-haves vs. nice-to-haves, you can avoid being unsatisfied later while still sticking to your budget.

TO PREVENT DISAPPOINTMENT:

- Make a list and sort it by level of importance.
- Ask your builder what makes the most sense if you are conflicted.
- Make the best decision you can, keeping the long term in mind.

MISTAKE
NO. 8

Hiring the Lowest Bidder

The lowest bidder is often the least expensive for a reason. The contractor may have underestimated costs, or worse yet, purposely omitted items in order to charge more during the project at a higher rate. You don't want added costs or a contractor who runs out of money (your money!) before the project is completed. But how can you be sure that all items and project details are covered? Unless you're familiar with construction language and information, the various forms and presentations used may be confusing and frustrating.

TO AVOID THE "UNDERBIDDING BLUES:"

- Fully investigate the background of your chosen contractor. In Oregon, research the history of your contractor at ccb.state.or.us/
- Remember that focusing on the lowest dollar amount does not tell you anything about trust.

MISTAKE
NO. 7

Re-using Sinks, Faucets, and Appliances

You may embrace the "three R's" – reduce, re-use and recycle, but bear in mind that old items don't have a warranty and will likely look out of place next to new appliances and surfaces. Aside from getting new appliances, what else can you do?

USE THESE "THREE R'S:"

- Refinish. Tubs, sinks and appliances can be repainted using epoxy or powder coating processes. Toilets, unfortunately, cannot be refinished. And beware, if toilets are not 1.5 gallon flush, they cannot be reinstalled.
- Re-use. If necessary, your existing appliances can usually be reinstalled until you have the funds to upgrade.
- Relax. Sometimes your budget won't allow for new appliances. Be ready for the item to feel out of place and enjoy the slightly eclectic look.

MISTAKE
NO. 6

Buying Before You Have a Final Plan

It may be tempting to buy that on-sale dishwasher before you've finished planning your kitchen remodel, but wait. Appliances are an integral part of any kitchen, and an inch or two can make a huge difference.

TO AVOID BUYER'S REMORSE:

- Take the time to evaluate your needs, explore your options and discover your appliance preferences with your designer.
- Visit showrooms and discuss appliance features with knowledgeable salespersons. Some fully-functional local showrooms even let you test cook on their appliances.
- Remember that function is king. You'll be sorry if that great on-sale appliance doesn't fit in your new kitchen or if it doesn't meet your specific need.

MISTAKE
NO. 5

Allowing Emotions to Get the Better of You

Remodeling can be difficult and emotionally challenging, even when it goes smoothly. Don't jump on the emotional roller coaster. If you have chosen the right designer and contractor they'll behave professionally and do their very best to create your dream. Overly-charged emotions can erode or destroy a good remodeling process.

TO STEER CLEAR OF EMOTIONAL LANDMINES:

- Be patient when occasional blips occur. Even well-defined and proven processes have their ups and downs.
- Keep cool and put trust in your partner. Good remodelers will stay focused on meeting your needs as quickly as possible.
- Give the remodeler the opportunity to fully finish the project and to address any problems. Deficiencies or errors can occur with even the best contractors.

MISTAKE
NO. 4

Failing to Budget Early On

It's difficult for a homeowner to know or understand the actual costs of various projects. You must discuss your budget with your designer and / or contractor early in the planning process – the earlier the better. Unguided design can blow your budget, leaving you with additional costs or an unfinished project.

CONSIDER THESE PLANNING TIPS:

- Be honest with yourself and your designer about what you can afford. Discuss the budget and your goals frequently during the design process to guide your designer / estimator.
- Ask for examples and pictures. If you find a project design you like, ask what it might cost.
- Visit remodeling.hw.net/cost-vs-value/2022 to get an objective report on typical local costs for common remodeling projects.

MISTAKE
NO. 3

Planning with the Wrong Professional

Your friend who designs highways may be a professional in his field, but he won't know the bumpy byways of residential remodeling. Your neighbor may design award-winning hospitals, but not understand a healthy remodeling process. Your project (and possibly your friendship) could suffer from good intentions.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANNING PROFESSIONAL:

- Make the process fun and enjoyable by finding someone who clicks with your personality.
- Choose a knowledgeable professional. Anyone can take down a list of what you want. It takes an experienced design professional to put it all together accurately.

MISTAKE
NO. 2

Forgetting to Do Your “Home” Work

All too often existing structural problems are uncovered during renovations. The good news? Many unknown conditions lurking in walls or ceilings can be identified and brought to your attention through a robust process of discovery before the project begins.

TO GET AN “A” IN HOME REMODELING:

- Fully examine your existing structure before beginning construction.
- Hire a seasoned remodeler. They’ll know what to look for and where to find it – minimizing surprises.
- Bring in another expert if necessary. Even experienced remodelers may not know all the details. Knowledgeable tradesmen (plumbers, electricians, etc.) can assess existing conditions.

MISTAKE
NO. 1

Jumping in Headfirst

Inadequate or hurried planning makes timely construction difficult. Without proper preparation, you may end up living with mistakes that could have been avoided.

TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL REMODELING PROJECT:

- Take the time to carefully evaluate your needs and wants, as well as proposed solutions. Hurrying the process diminishes the potential for a truly successful project.
- Get started early. Key decisions about design directions can take months. Begin looking for professional help at least a full year before your anticipated project completion.
- Expect professionalism. Good remodelers help you to make decisions with confidence. They can provide computer-aided drawings with color views and perspectives to help you visualize your project. Well-written job specifications and descriptions should support good drawings and clearly spell out the remodeler’s plan.

NO-RISK
NEXT
STEP

Contact Square Deal Remodeling for a No-Charge Consultation About Your Project

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

If you are considering a remodel of your home whether it be a kitchen, bathroom, addition or other improvement we'd love to help.

Square Deal Remodeling is an award-winning, full-service residential remodeling business founded in Portland, Oregon in 1992. We have won many prestigious awards including NARI Contractor of the Year and the Outstanding Remodeling Achievement Award. We are known for our ability to help homeowners realize the full potential of their homes without the usual anxiety and frustrations of remodeling.

We would be honored to have the opportunity to earn your business. Please contact us for a no-charge consultation about your project and we'll discuss how we can make your vision into reality.

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